

## Real Boss 171

### Chapter 171 Strangle in the cradle

There seemed to be a thousand words in Zhuang Liu's eyes, but in the end, he only replied with one sentence, "Maybe you don't remember me but I've been looking at you and hoping that God would send you to me."

Tan Rou didn't understand. When had Zhuang Liu seen her? Could it be that he still had a crush on her?

How could this be possible?

She thought about how the two of them had an engagement before she left the Tan family. The engagement was cancelled the moment Tan Jing returned to the Tan family. Could it be that Zhuang Liu had liked her since then?

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Tan Rou looked at Zhuang Liu in confusion.

Zhuang Liu didn't say anything more. He moved his palm away from Tan Rou's head and looked down at his legs. "Not only did you come to my side, but you also treated my illness. This is something I never would have thought of in the past. I'm afraid that I might burden you."

Hearing Zhuang Liu's words, Tan Rou didn't care about her shyness and quickly comforted him, "You will definitely recover, I promise! Don't be so pessimistic, you have to think positively."

Zhuang Liu smiled. "So, if I stand up, would I be able to think more about it?"

Tan Rou's face turned completely red. She was a little peeved. "I don't care what you're thinking!"

Zhuang Liu looked at Tan Rou lovingly and smiled foolishly.

Tan Rou laughed in anger. She really couldn't understand this man. He had such a domineering identity and could get whatever he wanted but he liked to show such a silly look and tease her. He even spoke in such a pitiful tone.

The two chatted for a while before Tan Rou finally asked. She looked at Xiao Mo and asked, "Where are you taking me? "

Xiao Mo finally felt a sense of presence. Only God knew how nervous he was when he heard the third young master and Miss Tan flirting with each other at the back of the car. He quickly replied, "To the hospital. Old Master Lu is there now."

Tan Rou was a little surprised and looked at Zhuang Liu with wide eyes. "Will I visit him today? I was already very surprised to receive your text message today. I didn't expect it to be so soon."

If she could see old master Lu as soon as possible, Tan Rou would be able to come up with a rough plan. If she waited for Tan Jing to take action, it would be too late.

Zhuang Liu's smile remained on her face. He nodded. "I just wanted to take you to dinner, but we would be passing by the hospital. Let's head over there and take a look. This way, you would be able to enjoy dinner later."

Tan Rou smiled obediently. "I'm not hungry. I'll go and see old master Lu first!"

The blush on her face hadn't disappeared yet, and her eyes were bright and curved into small crescents, exuding a sense of joy.

Seeing Tan Rou's beautiful smile, Zhuang Liu was a little fascinated.

Xiao Mo saw this scene from the rearview mirror and sighed emotionally.

How could the third young master not pamper her? At this point, even if Miss Tan wanted to see aliens one day, the third young master would immediately call the China National Space Administration to fulfil her wishes.

Tan Rou looked at the scenery outside the window expectantly. She thought to herself that this step that included the Old Master Lu was also very important. The reason why Tan Jing would be able to be so arrogant later on was definitely related to Old Master Lu and Lu Qing's favor. With the Tan family and the Lu family, it was with no doubt that Tan Jing had a smooth-sailing life.

At that time, it would be difficult for Tan Jing to bully her and the Tao family. Tan Rou would not be able to easily gain the upper hand like how she was now.

Tan Rou definitely couldn't allow Tan Jing to get another party on her side. Tan Jing was a typical villain who got what she wanted. Once she gained power, she would disregard everyone around her.

There was no need for Tan Rou to watch as Tan Jing gained another powerful trump card in her hands. Tan Rou had to kill her in the cradle as soon as possible.

Moreover, Tan Rou always felt that something was wrong. Even if the Tan family had some connections, the Lu family was not to be trifled with. Old Master Lu had been in bed for so many years, and the Lu family could not find a suitable doctor, but Tan Jing found one in such a short time?

There might be more to this. She had to see old Master Lu with her own eyes before she knew what was wrong with him.

Tan Rou turned around to look at Zhuang Liu and thanked him softly. "Thank you for helping me. Don't you think my request is a little confusing? After all, I have nothing to do with the Lu family but you're still helping me."

Zhuang Liu gently shook his head. "There's no need to say such things between us. If we have to be polite, wouldn't I have to thank you every day for saving my life? Without your nerve-soothing incense and your treatment of my leg, I'm afraid I'd rather die. You don't have to worry. I'll do my best to help you with what you want."

Tan Rou smiled sweetly and stopped being polite.

Zhuang Liu was incredibly nice to her and she would also be good to Zhuang Liu with all her heart. That was more than enough.

## Chapter 172 Visiting a patient

It didn't take long for Xiao Mo to arrive at the hospital.

Most of the doctors in the most authoritative military-affiliated hospital in the city had military rankings.

Zhuang Liu was pushed out of the car. The three of them walked through the grand lobby of the hospital. They passed through the winding and crowded corridor before arriving at a relatively quiet inpatient department.

Tan Rou looked around. A place like the hospital always gave people an inexplicable sense of oppression. Birth, ageing, illness, and death were the most powerless feelings in the world.

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Xiao Mo led the way and arrived at a VIP elevator. "Elder Lu is upstairs. He's an important official in the military and political field and so he has been given a private room."

Zhuang Liu nodded. "I'm sure you've made the arrangement in advance?"

Xiao Mo gave him a meaningful smile and said, "I've already informed them in advance. Even though Elder Lu found it strange, he agreed to it and thanked the third young master for your warm visit."

Old master Lu could not be blamed for his confusion. One was a military and political bigshot while the other was a business genius. The two of them had nothing to do with each other. The Third young master suddenly proposed to visit him. His attitude was humble but very firm and so, the old Master Lu could not reject him directly. For the sake of the Zhuang family, he was forced to say that he did share a few conversations with Elder Zhuang in the past. He was very touched that the third young master would pay him a visit on account of their old friendship. That was why Zhuang Liu had visited him today.

If old master Lu knew that third young master was so enthusiastic because of Miss Tan, would he find it ridiculous? This was a big favour afterall.

Zhuang Liu didn't think of it as a big deal. If Tan Rou wanted to see Elder Lu, he would satisfy her no matter what. She had asked Uncle Bai to help her previously but old Master Lu was using Western medicine in the hospital. Uncle Bai was famous in the medical world but he couldn't find a doctor with a professional background to enquire about Elder Lu's condition.

Therefore, Zhuang Liu simply went to old Master Lu directly and brought Tan Rou personally to the hospital. Tan Rou's medical skills were so excellent that it would not be difficult for her to know what's wrong. It was better than asking others.

The three of them took the elevator up and saw old Master Lu's guards standing at the door. Old Master Lu had retired and did not have any real power on the surface. The guards were more like bodyguards. They were all dressed in suits and had buzz cut hair. It was difficult to miss the temperament of a soldier with just one glance.

Seeing Zhuang Liu, the guard seemed to have received instructions in advance. He nodded politely and extended his hand to invite the three of them into the ward.

Zhuang Liu also nodded politely. It was not easy for old Master Lu to allow Zhuang Liu to do this and so, Zhuang Liu had to show respect as well.

The three of them entered the ward and saw old Master Lu sitting on the bed.

Tan Rou looked at him carefully. This military boss's hair was white but he was in good spirits. Even though he was plagued by illness, she could still see the high-spirited spirit of his youth.

The old general was wearing presbyopic glasses and reading the newspaper in his hand. His whole body was full of vigour, subconsciously making the other afraid of creating any noises around him.

When Old master Lu heard the voice, he squinted his eyes and turned to look at the three of them. He put down the newspaper in his hand, took off his glasses, and took the initiative to greet Zhuang Liu. "You must be the third son of the Zhuang family. Come quickly! Thank you for still thinking of visiting me!"

Tan Rou pushed Zhuang Liu forward and secretly observed old master Lu's expression.

Zhuang Liu smiled humbly. "Elder Lu, I'm not in good health, so I can't stand up to greet you. Please don't take offence. You're my elder and I've always heard Grandpa talk about your elegance. I've admired you for a long time and I'm sorry for being so rude today."

Both of them knew that the two families did not have much contact and there was nothing to reminisce about. However, since they were already here, they could only brace themselves and try to pull some strings.

Zhuang Liu put on the airs of a junior. Although old Master Lu was puzzled, he would not reject Zhuang Liu's good intentions.

Old Master Lu laughed heartily. "Why would you be disturbing me? I'm old and it's inevitable that I'll feel a little uncomfortable but I'm happy to see that you young people have such promising futures. You're much better than that brat of mine. If you're not in good health, you have to take good care of yourself!"

Zhuang Liu nodded and looked at Tan Rou, then patted her hand as a hint.

Tan Rou understood and nodded slightly.

Zhuang Liu was reminding Tan Rou to look for an opportunity to check on old Master Lu's condition.

It was already strange enough that Zhuang Liu came to visit old master Lu. If he introduced Tan Rou, who looked like a student, to old Master Lu, it would be too suspicious. Old Master Lu might think that Zhuang Liu had brought in some stranger to make fun of him.

Therefore, she could only rely on Zhuang Liu to talk to old Master Lu to distract him while Tan Rou carefully observed from the side.

Traditional Chinese Medicine was all about observing, listening, asking, and feeling. Now that Tan Rou has seen him in person, there will always be a chance.

Chapter 173 Zhuang Liu's little scheme

Zhuang Liu continued chatting with old Master Lu, "I've heard of your grandson, Lu Qing. He's handsome and well-known in school. He's definitely more promising than me."

Old Master Lu laughed helplessly. "Please don't comfort this old man anymore. That monkey doesn't even know how to act properly. I'll be grateful if he doesn't cause me any trouble."

Old Master Lu's head hurt when he thought of Lu Qing. Today, with Zhuang Liu as a comparison, he finally felt what it meant to feel proud of someone else's child. He sighed, "In recent times, with you from the Zhuang family, you've already become the head of the household at such a young age. You do things in such an orderly manner and your future is boundless but my grandson is still rebellious in school. I really want to throw him into the military! However, I'm afraid that he'll be like me and suffer the same losses as me!"

Zhuang Liu appeared to be modest. He tried his best to praise Lu Qing in front of the old man. He lowered his attitude and smiled bitterly. "Every family has its own difficulties. I envy him for being able to enjoy his school time so freely and happily."

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However, Zhuang Liu's heart was filled with pride and he was secretly proud of himself.

That's right! He had the abilities to protect Xiao Rou now. Not to mention Lu Qing, even the Lu family couldn't take Xiao Rou away from him. A man must have the strength to protect his woman. He was the best match for Xiao Rou. Lu Qing was still too young!

Old Master Lu still did not know that his grandson had been regarded as an imaginary enemy by Zhuang Liu and was silently disdainful of him. Hearing Zhuang Liu's honest words and seeing that he was trapped in a wheelchair despite his extraordinary temperament, Old Master Lu also felt sorry for Zhuang Liu.

He sighed. "It's not easy for you either. If your grandfather knew how hard it is for you now, he would be heartbroken too but, at the same time, he must be very proud of you. He's an old fox who has two more brains than others. He's already built a country for himself and even has a successor!"

The two of them exchanged pleasantries for a while and old Master Lu gradually let down his guard against Zhuang Liu. Although they were not familiar with each other before, he now had a tender affection for this young man.

Hence, old Master Lu said, "Don't just stand there. Come to my side. There aren't many young people who would visit me now. Since you're here today, you shall bring in some fresh air into my room."

Tan Rou smiled and pushed Zhuang Liu to old master Lu's bed.

Old Master Lu took this opportunity to look at Tan Rou. "Who is this little girl? She's beautiful! Could she be a little friend of yours?"

The older generation's words were more subtle but the meaning of it was self-evident. In front of an elder like Elder Lu, Tan Rou was a little shy and didn't know what to say.

Zhuang Liu smiled and finally had some of the energy of his age. Like a child, he introduced her to Elder Lu proudly, "She is a very important person to me. I happened to bring her along today to meet you." His tone was intimate, as if he was introducing a treasure he had found with great difficulty to an elder.

Elder Lu smiled again. "That's great! Both of you are a match made in heaven! It's perfect."

Zhuang Liu was very delighted. Although he had not brought Xiao Rou to meet his parents, he was doing the opposite now. He brought Xiao Rou to meet Lu Qing's elders. Old Master Lu had praised him and Xiao Rou for being a perfect match. Lu Qing would not be able to snatch Xiao Rou from his side.

Xiao Mo did not follow them. Instead, he stood at the door and looked at Zhuang Liu's smug face. Then, he turned his head away from them.

Old Master Lu was right about one thing. The old master of the Zhuang family was an old fox who had two more brains than others. He had a successor who was the third young master who was a little fox who had a few more brains than others.

He had secretly shown off his love interest in front of the elder of his love rival. If he didn't know the third young master well, he would have really thought that he was simple-minded.

In front of Miss Tan Rou, the third young master pretended to be harmless and gentle, but in fact, he was very concerned about her. He wanted to tell the world that no one was allowed to think about her!

On the other hand, Xiao Mo had no choice but to complain to himself after being tortured by such public displayed affection.

The atmosphere inside Old Master Lu's room was warm and bright.

Old Master Lu was now of old age. He had spent his entire life in the military as a bold and strong man but soon has learnt to become warm and gentle as well. Seeing that Zhuang Liu and Tan Rou were well-behaved and sensible, he was delighted.

Old Master Lu was like an ordinary old man who loved those who were younger than him. He warmly took out fruits and snacks to serve them. "These are all gifts from all those who came to visit me. I don't like having them so I'll give them all to you. Have some more of it!"

Tan Rou stepped forward and took a bag of apples. She took the initiative to pick up a fruit knife and began peeling the apples.

#### Chapter 174 Taking his pulse

As Zhuang Liu and old Master Lu chatted, Zhuang Liu deliberately talked about days in the army, which brought up old Master Lu's memories. He couldn't help but share his experiences when he was young with Zhuang Liu. Zhuang Liu listened carefully and chipped in from time to time.

It was inevitable for old people to be lonely and they loved to reminisce about the past. Now that old Master Lu had someone to talk to, he was even happier to talk about the past.

Old Master Lu's eyes sparkled. "That battle was indeed one that was incredibly difficult. There were so many bullets in the air..."

Tan Rou peeled an apple and handed it politely to Old Master Lu.

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Old Master Lu's mouth was dry from all the talking. He smiled at Tan Rou and reached out to take it.

Tan Rou's eyes flashed. Just as their hands were about to touch, the apple in her hand suddenly loosened and was about to roll to the ground.

Old Master Lu subconsciously reached out to catch the apple.

In that split second, Tan Rou caught the apple with one hand and grabbed old Master Lu's wrist with the other.

In just two to three seconds, Tan Rou seemed to have made a mistake but she had already placed all her attention on old Master Lu's wrist and felt his pulse in a split second.

Tan Rou caught the apple and let go of old Master Lu's wrist. She smiled apologetically and said, "I'm sorry, I was too impatient."

Old Master Lu came from the military and didn't care about these details. He thought that Tan Rou's hand had slipped and so he waved his hand forthrightly. "It's okay, don't just give it to me, you guys should have some yourself!"

Then, he continued to talk to Zhuang Liu about his previous war experience.

Tan Rou silently retreated to the side, her expression looking somewhat serious. She slightly frowned and gestured to Zhuang Liu.

When Zhuang Liu saw Tan Rou holding old Master Lu's wrist, he had already guessed what Tan Rou was trying to do. Now that he felt Tan Rou's gaze, he was relieved.

Xiao Rou was quick-witted and really seized the opportunity. She had indeed gained something tonight.

However, Zhuang Liu also noticed the serious look on her face and guessed that old Master Lu's condition was not looking good. Looking at how old Master Lu was reminiscing about the past, he felt emotional and started to talk to him more sincerely.

They stayed in old Master Lu's ward for a full two hours. Old Master Lu had a great time chatting, and after a while, he had already regarded Zhuang Liu and Tan Rou as old friends.

He didn't expect that for a young man like Zhuang Liu, not only was he a genius in the business world, he was also interested in military affairs. If it wasn't for his poor health, Zhuang Liu would have been sent to train as a general.

As for the little girl he brought along, she looked weak but she was also interested in the military and had an understanding in the art of war. She had a straightforward and generous personality. These two definitely ordinary children.

Old Master Lu was still sick after all. After chatting for so long in high spirits, he was starting to get tired.

Zhuang Liu and Tan Rou could tell that old Master Lu was tired. So, they quickly took the initiative to say goodbye, afraid of delaying his rest.

Old Master Lu was also honest and didn't try to act strong. He smiled and said, "I'm old now, unlike before. Today's chat was really enjoyable. If you guys are free, you can come and accompany me more. I feel younger just by chatting with you guys!"

Zhuang Liu and Tan Rou nodded their heads, especially Tan Rou, who smiled at Elder Lu sincerely.

With this sentence, it would be much more convenient for her to secretly check on old Master Lu's condition in the future. She couldn't always let Zhuang Liu cover for her.

The two of them bade farewell to old Master Lu, who then shouted outside, "Xiao Zhou! Help me send them off. If they come again in the future, you'd have to prepare food for them in the future."

He was indirectly telling them that they didn't need to inform him in advance if they wanted to visit him and that they could just come visit him whenever they liked.

The security guard replied with a military salute. "Yes, Sir!"

He then smiled courteously at the three of them, much more enthusiastic than before.

The other party sent them off the elevator before parting ways.

After she left, Zhuang Liu couldn't help but ask Tan Rou, "How was it? I saw how you grabbed his wrist earlier. Was there enough time?"

Tan Rou nodded. "It's enough. I can tell by observing Elder Lu's face, eyes, and lips but I was still worried. So, I found a chance to check his pulse. Although it was only for a short time, it was enough for me to know his condition."

Zhuang Liu didn't know why Tan Rou was so interested in old Master Lu's condition, but when he thought of Tan Rou's expression from earlier, he was a little worried. "Is it serious?"

Tan Rou frowned. "It's hard to say. Based on old Master Lu's age and experience, it's normal for his body to be weak but with his current situation, it may deteriorate very quickly and it's a little dangerous."

Chapter 175 Third young master's lack of self-confidence

Zhuang Liu nodded thoughtfully and asked, "Then ... Do you want to find a way to cure old master Lu?"

Tan Rou naturally had nothing to hide from Zhuang Liu, so she answered without thinking, "That's what I plan to do."

Hearing Tan Rou's affirmative answer, Zhuang Liu didn't ask for the reason. He directly considered the difficulty of this matter.

"Although Old master Lu is kind, he was born in the military and is incredibly stubborn. He survived the rain of bullets and has been influenced by a large number of advanced foreign technologies back in his days. He is more inclined to Western medicine and would think that they could save lives."



Zhuang Liu helped Tan Rou analyze the situation seriously. "That's why we didn't dare to ask you to check on him directly and openly earlier. We can only do it secretly. In my opinion, we ought to plan thoroughly and help change Old Master Lu's opinion when it comes to traditional medicine."

Tan Rou saw that Zhuang Liu was even more concerned about her matters than she was, so she smiled obediently. "I think so too. Fortunately, I left a good impression today. Thank you for chatting with Elder Lu for so long. I can come here more often in the future because of you."

Zhuang Liu's eyes lit up. "You meant we, right? Are you going to come here on your own? Just tell me in advance if you want to visit him again. I'll come with you and it'll be easier for us to help each other cover the truth."

Zhuang Liu did not ask why Tan Rou was so eager to treat old master Lu. It was because he wanted to respect Tan Rou and support her unconditionally.

If Tan Rou said she wanted to treat him, then she should; even if there was no reason for it and was merely a decision made at the spur of a moment. Zhuang Liu had confidence in Tan Rou's medical skills, which was also a good thing for Old Master Lu.

However, Zhuang Liu still had some worries in his heart. That was Old Master Lu. As his only biological grandson, Lu Qing would definitely come to the hospital to visit him often. If he met Xiao Rou one day, wouldn't Zhuang Liu be sending Xiao Rou to his potential love rival?

Once Xiao Rou cured Old master Lu's illness, what if Lu Qing became more excited and liked Xiao Rou even more?

The scene of Lu Qing offering himself as a gift of gratitude appeared in Zhuang Liu's mind. He quickly forced himself to stop this fantasy, or else he would really want to stop Tan Rou from treating Old Master Lu.

Even if there was anyone who wanted to offer themselves for getting treated by Xiao Rou, it should be him! He was Xiao Rou's first patient ever. If Lu Qing wanted to hop onto this train, he would first have to ask for permission from Zhuang Liu.

However, Zhuang Liu could not say these words to Tan Rou.

Although Zhuang Liu was willing to show his softest and gentlest side to Tan Rou, in the end, a man's pride and face were more important than anything else. How could he admit in front of Xiao Rou that he was worried about a young boy?

Zhuang Liu wanted to show his strong and calm side to Tan Rou and let her know that he could be her support.

As a result, Zhuang Liu was extremely anxious. On the surface, he pretended to be kind and did not have any other thoughts on his mind, but his frowning thick eyebrows and tightly pursed thin lips revealed his uneasy heart.

Tan Rou naturally saw it, but she was still a little puzzled. "You're coming with us in the future? I'm just worried that you might be busy with work. You've accompanied me here today and have been chatting

with Old Master Lu. You must be tired, right? In fact, I can do it myself. Maybe I'll run into Lu Qing, which would be even more convenient."

It would have been fine if Tan Rou didn't mention it. When she mentioned Lu Qing so naturally, Zhuang Liu's heart clenched tightly. His sense of crisis instantly exploded. He wanted to pack Tan Rou up and take her away right now. It was best not to come to this hospital!

However, Zhuang Liu knew that he couldn't do that. Xiao Rou and Lu Qing would spend a lot of time together in school. He couldn't stop her.

Zhuang Liu was a little depressed. He even started to think about whether he should go back to school. He really wanted to spend more time with Tan Rou.

Tan Rou noticed how Zhuang Liu has been acting strange. He was so excited at one moment, and then suddenly lost his spirit. She was a little worried. "What's wrong? Are you not feeling well?"

Xiao Mo sighed to himself. The third young master had so much love for Tan Rou but he couldn't express himself. The third young master was afraid that Lu Qing would distract Miss Tan Rou, but he couldn't say it.

Zhuang Liu was the third young master of the Zhuang family and a Big Boss of the business world, but he was not confident in love.

Xiao Mo glanced at Zhuang Liu with a smile and thought to himself, 'well, he's the best and most professional assistant in the world. If the master cannot bring himself to talk about such things, he should help!!'

Xiao Mo tried his best not to gloat. He looked at Tan Rou with a straight face and said, "Miss Tan, our third master is indeed feeling uncomfortable. He is feeling uncomfortable in his heart!"

Chapter 176 It's too hard and easily broken

Tan Rou didn't understand and was a little puzzled. "His heart doesn't feel comfortable?"

Xiao Mo nodded his head and said, "Yes, Miss Tan is so devoted to Old Master Lu and with how you and Lu Qing are said to be the perfect couple in school, the Third master is probably jealous."

Tan Rou couldn't hold back her laughter and sneaked a glance at Zhuang Liu. "Are you serious? "

Zhuang Liu's ears were red, but he pretended to be magnanimous. "Xiao Mo! What nonsense are you talking about? You don't want the bonus anymore, do you?"

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But as he thought about it, Xiao Mo has already mentioned it openly, it would have been better if he went all out. What would his reputation mean when he's with Tan Rou?

He looked at Tan Rou awkwardly, which was rare and said, "Next time, bring me along."

Only then did Tan Rou feel a little shy.

Zhuang Liu was always like this, exposing his most honest side to her. This immediately made Tan Rou's heart soften, and she explained, "I didn't treat Elder Lu for Lu Qing, I wanted to do this for myself. Don't think too much about it. If you're not busy, it'd be great if we get to come together."

Zhuang Liu was satisfied. His lips curled into a smile and he glared at Xiao Mo. His eyes were filled with joy, as if he was saying, 'you did the right thing.'

Xiao Mo lowered his head and tried to hold back his laughter. Ever since the third master had threatened to deduct his salary for sending Miss Tan home, Xiao Mo had already understood.

If there was anyone who disturbed the third young master and Miss Tan's relationship, they would be punished regardless of whether it was intentional or not. On the contrary, as long as what they did was beneficial to the relationship between the third young master and Miss Tan, it would make the third young master happy no matter what.

If the third young master was happy, his bonus would be higher and they would be able to welcome spring to their office everyday.

After leaving the hospital, Zhuang Liu took Tan Rou to the private restaurant they visited last time.

When she saw the quiet bamboo forest and the elegant courtyard again, Tan Rou was already looking forward to it.

Although Chen Yi and Tan Jing had disturbed them the last time, the food here was really delicious. She couldn't forget it after trying it once.

The small courtyard was called 'Clearwater Pavilion'. The middle-aged boss who tried to smooth things over last time was known as Fang. This time, when he heard that Zhuang Liu had brought Tan Rou over again, he wanted to get the two to drink tea with him no matter what.

Tan Rou wasn't reserved. She liked this place. Last time, she felt that the owner who could build such a paradise must be an amazing person.

Although the guests who were allowed to dine here were either rich or noble, this was definitely not the only measure for this place. More importantly, they had to be like-minded and pure-hearted to be allowed entry.

Otherwise, Chen Yi and Tan Jing wouldn't have been rejected at the door, and Tan Rou wouldn't have been treated so kindly by Mr. Fang.

With a smile, Mr. Fang handed the brewed tea to Zhuang Liu and Tan Rou. "My dear young friends, try it. This is a new batch of high-quality tea leaves. I don't offer them to ordinary people. One must have a good taste in order to appreciate such tea."

With a smile, Zhuang Liu picked up the teacup leisurely and began to chat with Mr. Fang.

Even Zhuang Liu, who was a proud child of god who always had self-discipline in the business world, showed a rare trace of comfort here. Other than the gentleness in front of Tan Rou, this was the one time where he felt most relaxed.

Tan Rou silently observed Mr. Fang and found that although he looked indifferent to fame and fortune, he was different from Bai Jing.

Uncle Bai was a proud and aloof doctor who didn't want to associate himself with the people around him. However, Mr. Fang was a man who had explored the world and accepted the complicated relationships in the society without getting involved.

No wonder all these high-ranking officials and nobles liked coming here.

Being secluded in a city. Wasn't this one kind of wisdom as well?

Seeing that Tan Rou didn't say anything, Mr. Fang seemed to be deep in thought, so he greeted her with a smile, "It wasn't very pleasant the last time we met, and I was worried that I wouldn't be able to entertain you well. Today, we must enjoy ourselves to the fullest!"

Tan Rou smiled. "I like this place very much. I must have caused a lot of trouble for you the last time I was here. I truly felt bad for what happened."

Mr. Fang waved his hand. "I can tell who's the one who's causing trouble. I've been wandering half my life, and I've seen enough of the fickleness of human nature and also of the world. I don't want to be bothered by those schemes and intrigues anymore, but I'm in the mortal world, and I can't be completely clear about it. That's why there's this Clearwater Pavilion."

Mr. Fang was kind enough not to make things very obvious. Instead, he comforted Tan Rou tactfully, "You can't choose your own life, but you can control it. Dear friend, you are like a sharp blade that has just been unsheathed, showing off its edge, but you must also learn to protect yourself. After all, it's easy to break if you're too rigid. If you ever feel tired, come over to my place, it will be a great place for you to rest."

#### Chapter 177 Fight for love

Tan Rou was a little touched. She had come all the way here for nothing but revenge and to make up for the stupidity of her previous life. No matter how many traps and slanders there were, she could laugh it off and then make them pay back double.

However, it was undeniable that she had met many good people. First, she had gained Uncle Bai's respect and appreciation, which allowed her spices and medicinal herbs to be put to good use.

Then, Zhuang Liu took care of her and helped her with all his heart. Mr. Fang must have seen through her dispute with the Tan family and was comforting her as well.

It was unfortunate for her to carry the hatred of her previous life, but wasn't it a kind of fortune to be able to meet these noble people on the road to revenge?

Tan Rou knew how to be grateful. She knew that if Mr Fang didn't mean what he said for her own good, he could just pretend that he didn't know anything and just acted to be respectful for Zhuang Liu's sake. Instead, he took the risk of being rejected and even told her that being stretched too out may break her.

Tan Rou picked up the teacup and thanked Mr. Fang sincerely, "Thank you for your reminder. I have things to do and enemies that I can't forgive, but I'll remember what you said. I'll protect myself and won't be stubborn."

Mr. Fang nodded in satisfaction. "You're also a child, and it's not a bad thing to have an obsession. Everyone has their own inner demons, and it's already amazing that you can face them bravely."

Mr. Fang thought of Tan Rou's performance last time and smiled. "To be honest, even though I think I've met many people, I've rarely seen a girl as bold as you. There's something about you that's very attractive. At that time, I even thought to myself about how Zhuang Liu came to know someone like you? She's not afraid of anything, but she's also very smart. Hahahahaha....."

Zhuang Liu had been quietly listening to their conversation, and his eyes lingered on Tan Rou, unwilling to leave. Hearing Mr. Fang's words, he smiled and said, "I like her like this. She's like an invincible little sun. She has taught me a lot."

Tan Rou smiled. "I'm not as good as you say. I just don't want to be wronged by them anymore. I only want them to get a taste of their own medicine and get revenge everytime they provoke me. I'll fight back for my own sake."

Mr. Fang laughed. "Nice! You are a courageous woman! Come, let's drink tea instead of wine. I shall salute you for your magnanimity and courage!"

The three of them had a good chat. During this time, Zhuang Liu quietly approached Tan Rou and whispered, "I'm not worried that you'll break easily. You've always been smart and won't hurt yourself, but I still feel uneasy. No matter what, you can do whatever you want, but remember to make yourself happy, okay?"

Tan Rou was silent for a moment before she smiled.

She had always wanted to take revenge and constantly asked herself not to take it lightly. Her greatest pleasure was to see Tan Jing and the Tan family suffer in front of her. Even in her dreams, she wanted to return the pain of her previous life to the Tan family.

But, this evening, the breeze blew. The fragrance of bamboo leaves and tea assailed her nose. Zhuang Liu approached her and told her softly to remember to be happy.

Tan Rou had to admit that in this life, she was not only moved by revenge, but also by true love. In her previous life, she had probably already obtained the love and care that she had been yearning for from the Tao family and these friends.

This was her reward.

Tan Rou's heart was very clear now. She was determined to spend the rest of her life well. Not only that, she also wanted to enjoy this hard-earned true love and protect the Tao family.

She used to live for revenge, but now she was going to live for love. If the Tan family wanted to destroy all this, then they shall not blame her for killing them!

A person who had received love would be much crazier in order to protect his love than a person who was full of hatred.

This was a belief that Tan Jing, who only wanted fame and fortune and was unscrupulous, would never understand.

After the three of them finished their tea and rested enough, Mr. Fang asked the kitchen to prepare some dishes for Zhuang Liu and Tan Rou to taste. There was no menu and all of the dishes had been improvised according to the seasonal ingredients available.

Tan Rou satisfyingly tasted them one by one, and as she ate, she began to laugh.

Zhuang Liu felt that Tan Rou was especially cute like this, so he asked softly, "What's wrong? You're happy that you get to enjoy something so delicious?"

Tan Rou licked her lips. "Of course I'm happy, but I remember that there's a little glutton at home who's more gluttonous than me. I'll pack some for him later."

Tan Rou felt quite happy at the thought of Tao Qi jumping up and down in anxiety during the day because she had been accused of cheating.

The little brat didn't let her down. She would bring some good food home to reward him.

Chapter 178 Tao Qi's worry

After dinner, Mr. Fang politely saw the three of them off.

Xiao Mo drove Tan Rou home. This time, he had learned his lesson. He did not drive so slowly that Tan Rou would suspect him, but he still deliberately took his time so that Zhuang Liu and Tan Rou could spend some time together.

Tan Rou solved a big problem at school, went to see Old Master Lu, and even had a sumptuous dinner. This day was particularly fulfilling and satisfying.

Even though Tan Rou was used to a cold face, she inadvertently showed a satisfied expression at this time, like a kitten that had its fur stroked.

!!

Zhuang Liu looked at Tan Rou lovingly. "Remember to send me a message if there's anything. Don't leave me hanging for too long but you don't have to miss me all the time. Just take good care of yourself."

Tan Rou nodded casually. "I know. You've told me this many times. I know."

Zhuang Liu laughed. In the beginning, Tan Rou was still a distance away from him and spoke politely, but now she was impatient and had become closer to him.

Tan Rou looked at Zhuang Liu with a smile. "Remember to take the medicine I gave you. In two days, we'll be going through the second treatment. Your condition is much better now so you have to eat more too."

Zhuang Liu mimicked Tan Rou and nodded impatiently. "I know. You've told me this many times!" Then, he raised his eyebrows and looked at Tan Rou mischievously.

Tan Rou couldn't help but grin. The two laughed foolishly and looked at each other. The atmosphere was just right.

Xiao Mo chuckled and said, "Are you treating each other like children? Both of you are geniuses but you're still so worried about each other. You're constantly nagging at each other over such small matters." After he finished speaking, he even felt that he was very humorous and grinned.

Poor Xiao Mo didn't understand that they only did so because they were worried about each other. No matter how strong a person was, they would become childish in such an atmosphere.

Therefore, when Zhuang Liu's piercing gaze landed on Xiao Mo, the single man realized that he had said the wrong words.

Tan Rou bade farewell to the high-spirited Zhuang Liu when she arrived at her house. She glanced at Xiao Mo, who was sitting in front of her with his head hung low, and gloated at his misfortune.

As soon as she entered the house, she heard Tao Qi's hurried footsteps, the floor creaking as he stomped on it.

"You're back! What happened?" Tao Qi asked impatiently. His big eyes were filled with concern that even he did not notice!

Tan Rou gently touched Tao Qi's little head. "Of course, I'm fine. Don't you know my strength? I didn't do it, so no one can accuse me of it."

Mrs. Tao was making pear soup in the kitchen. "What's wrong? What happened?"

Tan Rou didn't want to tell Mrs. Tao about the ridiculous things that Tan Jing had done. Mr. And Mrs. Tao had already completely despised Tan Jing, and if she said more, it would only make them worry for her. "It's nothing. There was a misunderstanding during the exam today, but it's been resolved."

Mrs. Tao nodded. "That's good. Rou'er, you must've had a hard time with your exams today. I've made some pear soup for you to try. It'll help to reduce the heatiness."

Tan Rou agreed with a smile.

It was rare that Tao Qi's attention wasn't diverted by the food. He was still thinking about Tan Rou. When he heard Tan Rou say that it was settled, he turned his head awkwardly. "That's good. Don't do anything embarrassing. Aren't you very powerful at home? How did you get accused?! You only know how to bully me. Why were you even brought to the principal's office?"

Tan Rou narrowed her eyes. "How did you know about that? You even know when I go to the principal's office."

Tao Qi blinked, not willing to say anything.

Tan Rou guessed that it was because of Tan Jing. She thought that Tan Rou was done for this time, so she couldn't help but inform Tao Qi of her little tricks. She also wanted Tao Qi to quickly tell his family and have them rush to school to give her a good scolding.

Unfortunately, her plan failed.

Tan Rou randomly rubbed Tao Qi's hair and said with a smirk, "Aren't you smart too? Think about it. What was the intention of the person who told you about this? Who had the motive and ability to do what I was accused of?"

Tao Qi's heart sank.

From the beginning, he had felt that something was wrong. Why was Tan Rou accused of cheating? Why didn't Sister Jingjing believe him when he had anxiously explained it to her? Tan Rou said that she had a motive and ability. Could it be..."

Tan Rou lowered her voice so that Mrs. Tao wouldn't hear her, then whispered in Tao Qi's ear, "Director Wang, who wronged me, said that the Tan family promised him some benefits. I have the video of it as evidence. I didn't make this up."

Chapter 179 Who else could it be if not her ?

Tao Qi's eyes widened as he looked at Tan Rou in a daze. He muttered, "She won't. Although you've always bullied Sister Jingjing, and she might hate you or dislike you. She's very kind. She wouldn't....."

Tan Rou shrugged her shoulders. She wouldn't tell her parents about these things, but to Tao Qi, who was still deceived by Tan Jing, Tan Rou still patiently explained, "If you still believe in her kindness, then I have nothing to say. The people who framed me were from the Wei family who got the instructions from the Tan family; even Director Wang, who wanted to convict me, said that it was the Tan family's doing."

Tan Rou didn't exaggerate and simply told the truth. Even though Tao Qi was young, he could feel that something was wrong.

Tan Rou continued, "If tan Jing was really innocent and didn't know anything about this, why did she tell you all about this in such a hurry? In her heart, she probably thinks that I have no abilities to change the situation that I was in.

!!

Tao Qi knew that Tan Rou's suspicion was reasonable. Sister Jingjing's behaviour today was indeed too suspicious. She was not like her at all.

He knew that Tan Rou's academic results were very good, but Sister Jingjing had no idea about it. Back then, it was sister Jingjing who told him that Tan Rou was good for nothing and that she was a bad student.

What if she deliberately framed Tan Rou for cheating under such circumstances?

Tao Qi didn't dare to think any further. He felt that Tan Jing's gentle and beautiful image was slowly crumbling in his mind.

Why did Sister Jingjing do this? However, the evidence was so obvious. If it wasn't her, who else could it be?

Tao Qi didn't even have time to resist Tan Rou messing up his hair. His little face was scrunched up, and he stood in place dejectedly.



Tan Rou smiled and lifted the food she had packed from the Clearwater Pavilion. She gestured to Tao Qi. "Don't think too much about it. Do you want to eat something delicious? I specially brought it back for you."

Tao Qi looked at the bag, not in the mood.

Tan Rou deliberately teased him. "There's a dish made from bamboo shoots, steamed pork ribs, milk and lotus seed soup... It smells so good. If you like it, I'll take You there next time. There's a large bamboo forest there, and you can even go into the river to catch fish."

Tao Qi's eyes lit up. He stared at Tan Rou and was a little tempted.

For children of his age, this kind of place that was close to nature allowed them to release their nature and feel at ease.

Mrs. Tao had finished making the pear soup and was carefully bringing it out. Seeing the siblings still standing there, she asked with a smile, "What secret are you two talking about? Xiao Qi was just about to get close to me. Your sister just came back, don't pester her! Come and have some soup!"

Tao Qi snorted coldly. "I'm not pestering her! I'm going to eat!"

After saying that, he ran to the dining table and looked at Tan Rou with a proud expression.

Tan Rou nodded with a smile, knowing that the little devil had agreed to eat. She brought the food to the table and replied, "I brought him some delicious food from outside. Let him eat it with the pear soup."

Mrs. Tao was pleased. "Look at how much your sister cares about you. I don't know what's wrong with this brat. He's been so depressed the whole night and didn't even eat much. Now that your sister is home, do you feel relieved now?!"

Tao Qi's face reddened and he started to scream, "I didn't, I didn't! Don't say another word!!!"

Tan Rou and Mother Tao looked at each other and smiled. They were both amused by Tao Qi's two-faced look.

The atmosphere in the Tao family was gradually getting on the right track, and there was warmth everywhere. Tao Qi's obsession with Tan Jing was also crumbling bit by bit, and it was only a matter of time before he put down his awkwardness and accepted Tan Rou.

However, the atmosphere at the Tan family's side was strange.

Tan Jing sat silently on the sofa with his head lowered. She unconsciously fiddled with her hands and was so nervous that she did not dare to speak.

Tan Song and Chen Yi were sitting on the other side. Chen Yi looked at Tan Jing with resentment.

Tan Song answered the principal's phone call impatiently as if the word 'unhappy' was written all over his body. He perfunctorily agreed with the principal's description of what happened during the day.

The principal said bluntly, "The Tan family's behavior is indeed not in line with the school's purpose and philosophy. As the investor, you have indeed provided help to the construction of the school, but this

can not be a privilege for you and your child in the school. The opportunity for education should be fair. Accusing others is a problem of moral quality!”

Tan Song really did not want to listen to this kind of education. Now, he only felt that the principal was looking for trouble. However, he could only agree to what the principal was saying, “Yes, that’s true. I’ll educate her.”

#### Chapter 180 Can’t go back

Naturally, the principal could tell that Tan Song didn’t think that he had done something wrong. His tone was perfunctory. People like him were already used to special priorities. Tan Song would never accept it if they continued talking about how all humans were equal.

However, the principal still conveyed the school’s attitude in a business-like manner. “Wang Li’s phone call made it clear that he was instructed by the Tan family. Since there is no evidence of Tan Jing’s involvement, she will not be punished for the time being. I only made this call personally to inform you of this as during the day, the school tried contacting you and your wife many times, but no one was willing to come to the school to deal with this issue. So, this is the only way we could do it; something like a simple parent-teachers meet.”

During the day, the principal called Tan Song and Chen Yi, but Tan Song was busy with a meeting and Chen Yi was in the beauty salon. They were not in the mood to go to school.

For years, they had never worried about their children. They had left Tan Rou to deal with everything on her own. Now that Tan Jing was back, it was the first time that Tan Song and Chen Yi knew that the school would invite parents.

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The principal was not extra nice just because he was Tan Song. He even felt unhappy about how irresponsible they were. He said coldly, “No matter how busy you and your wife are, you have to pay attention to the child’s physical and mental health and set an example for the child. In this matter, Wei Ling is the main culprit. We will expel her from the school as a warning to others.”

Tan Song gradually lost his patience and gave a simple reply.

Wei Ling? The youngest daughter of the Wei family? What did her life or death have to do with him? After a busy day, he still had to be nagged by this old man at night. It was really annoying.

The principal sighed slightly. In the education industry, one had to be more open-minded after a long time. Some people were stubborn in their bones. As the saying goes, a crooked stick will have a crooked shadow. It would be difficult for him to solve the problem from the root itself. He could only respect the fate of others.

He had already said things that needed to be said and had done his duty. The principal did not waste any time and directly hung up the phone.

“MMM...” Tan Song heaved a long sigh of relief and threw the phone on the coffee table. He turned his head and glared at Tan Jing. “I’ve given you enough face in front of the principal just now, right? I don’t even know what happened, and I was given a good lecture. What good things did you do behind my and

your mother's back? I'm so busy with work, yet I still have to deal with your trivial matters! How can you be so insensible!"

Chen Yi was also impatient, but she didn't want Tan Song to be worried about what was happening at home. Wouldn't that make her, the matriarch of the family, look incompetent?

She quickly explained, "That principal called and said that the Tan family instructed director Wang to frame Tan Rou for cheating in the exam. He even deleted the surveillance video. He asked me if I knew about it. I was dumbfounded! Then, he told me to pass the phone to you. I didn't expect this to happen either. I didn't know anything about it. Jingjing, how dare you! Quickly apologize to your father!"

Tan Jing bit her lip hard. She did not expect her plan to be revealed to Tan Song and Chen Yi. After this incident, they would no longer have a good impression of her.

Tan Jing knew very well that Tan Song always cared about his career. He only wanted to be a father who doesn't have any responsibilities. It was best not to bother him with family matters. Chen Yi wanted to be a rich lady who enjoyed herself. She would occasionally show her motherly love and satisfy Tan Jing's momentary whims.

Perhaps it was because they were related by blood, so their feelings for her were deeper than Tan Rou's, but once their bottom line was crossed, these feelings would become insignificant.

Tan Jing bit her lip hard. She had never felt this kind of blame and disdain when she was in the Tao family. Mother Tao would only comfort her gently, and Father Tao would try his best to help her. They loved her unconditionally. At that time, she didn't need to do all these things to hurt anyone.

Now, she had spent so much effort to frame Tan Rou, but not only did she fail, but she also had to bear Tan Song and Chen Yi's interrogation. It was simply unbearable. Tan Jing had never felt so tired before, and she even began to miss the days of the Tao family.

However, there was no turning back. She and Tan Rou were already irreconcilable. What if everything in the Tan family was fake? At least they had the money.

Tan Jing pretended to be aggrieved and explained, "I was just angry. Mom, dad, don't you hate Tan Rou? Although I've returned home, my heart still aches when I think of how she has taken over your daughter's identity for all these years. She has provoked me many times and insulted you in front of me. I... I only thought of this method to help you vent your anger!"